United Nations A/53/654

General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 November 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 163
Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/454) on the financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General who provided additional information.

2. The Advisory Committee notes that the Security Council, by its resolution 1181 (1998) of 13 July 1998, established UNOMSIL for an initial period of six months, that is, until 13 January 1999.

3. The Advisory Committee recalls that prior to the establishment of UNOMSIL, regular budget appropriations had been used for financing of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone. The Committee was informed that for the year 1998, an amount of $889,100 gross ($827,800 net) had been appropriated by the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution 52/221 of 22 December 1997. From this appropriation, estimated expenditures for the period from 1 January to 12 July 1998 as at 30 October 1998 amounted to $659,100 gross ($588,600 net), resulting in a projected unencumbered balance of $230,000 gross ($239,200 net). The Committee notes that this amount is separate from the amounts requested for the financing of UNOMSIL.

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that the Security Council, by its resolution 1162 (1998) of 17 April 1998, decided to deploy up to 10 military liaison officers and security advisory personnel to Sierra Leone for a three-month period, beginning 17 April 1998, under the authority of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. The financing for these personnel was from the Working Capital Fund under the terms of General Assembly resolution 52/223 of 22 December 1997 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1998–1999. On 19 May 1998, the Committee concurred in a request to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $711,800 gross ($699,000 net). Under paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution 52/223, the Secretary-General authorized further commitments of $540,700 gross ($521,200 net). Thus, the total commitment authority for this purpose amounted to $1,252,500 gross ($1,220,200 net). From this amount, expenditures for the period from 17 April to 12 July 1998 are estimated at $783,700 gross ($768,100 net), leaving an estimated unutilized balance of $468,800 gross ($452,100 net) (see A/53/454, annex I, column 3).

5. As indicated in paragraph 3 of the report of the Secretary-General, in order to meet the cost of the most immediate and essential start-up requirements relating to the establishment and operation of UNOMSIL, the Advisory Committee had concurred in the Secretary-General's request

98-34405 (E) 111198

to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $10,624,200 gross ($10,409,500 net) for a four-month period from 13 July to 13 November 1998 (see annex below). The Advisory Committee was informed that, based on preliminary data as at 30 September 1998, expenditure in an amount of $1,440,900 had been accounted for from the total commitment authority of $10,624,200 gross ($10,409,500 net).

6. The report of the Secretary-General contains the proposed budget for the establishment and operation of UNOMSIL for the 12-month period from 13 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, amounting to $24,323,500 gross ($23,472,800 net), inclusive of $783,700 gross ($768,100 net) related to the deployment of military liaison officers and security advisory personnel for the period from 17 April to 12 July 1998 as mentioned in paragraph 4 above.

7. The Advisory Committee notes from annex I to the report of the Secretary-General that of the total estimated cost of $24,323,500 gross ($23,472,800 net), an amount of $783,700 gross ($768,100 net) relates to the period from 17 April to 12 July 1998 (annex I, column 3), while $14,084,900 gross ($13,692,900 net) is estimated for the mandate period from 13 July 1998 to 13 January 1999 (annex I, column 6). As indicated in annex I, column 7, an amount of $9,454,900 gross ($9,011,800 net) has been estimated for the maintenance of UNOMSIL for the period from 14 January 1999 to 30 June 1999, which is equivalent to a monthly rate of $1,688,375 gross ($1,609,250 net).

8. The resource requirements proposed in the Secretary-General's report are based on the phased deployment of 188 military and civilian personnel, consisting of 85 military observers inclusive of a 15-person medical unit, 5 civilian police advisers, 50 international civilian personnel (23 Professional, 18 Field Service and 9 General Service staff) and 48 locally recruited staff.

9. As indicated in paragraph 8 of the report, the 15-person medical unit and most of the support staff were successfully deployed in August 1998. Annex V to the report reflects the deployment schedule for military and civilian personnel for the period from 13 July 1998 to 30 June 1999. However, the Advisory Committee was informed that, in the light of paragraphs 13 and 52 of the report of the Secretary-General of 16 October 1998 to the Security Council (S/1998/960), implementation of the second and third phases of deployment of military observers had been delayed, resulting in cost reductions totalling $241,500 under military personnel costs. The Committee was also informed that, based on revised information provided by the Board of Auditors, provision under audit services could be reduced by $4,700.

10. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 16 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/454) that, as at 28 September 1998, a voluntary contribution in the amount of $832,150 had been received for the purposes outlined in paragraph 15 of the report. On enquiry, the Committee was informed that the contribution had not been utilized to date.

11. As indicated in paragraph 17 of the report, a status of mission Agreement was signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations on 29 July 1998. The Advisory Committee was informed that so far the Government was not able to provide any contribution in the form of premises; the Mission had previously been sharing premises with other United Nations agencies but had subsequently moved to separate rented premises.

12. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 19 of the report that some 49 per cent of the total budget for the period from 13 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 is based on costs and ratios contained in the standard cost and ratio manual, while the remaining 51 per cent has been prepared on mission-specific costs and ratios.

13. Information on non-recurrent requirements is provided in section B of annex II to the report. The Advisory Committee was informed that, in general, amounts indicated in annex II, section B, column 6, under the heading "total cost" are inclusive of the current inventory items that have already been acquired by the Mission. Thus, the requirements of $142,800 for the acquisition of 84 computers, as shown in column 4 of the annex under the heading "total number of additional units", was inclusive of the 37 computers shown in column 1 under the heading "current inventory". The Committee was informed that where the current inventory (column 1) exceeds the total number of additional units (column 4) it is reflective of shipments received by the Mission from the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi.

14. The Advisory Committee was given a breakdown of the distribution of the 84 personal computers and was informed that 8 computer units would be held in reserve. The Committee recommends that, as far as possible, use should be made from within in-house assets available at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi for data processing, communications and other equipment needs.

15. With regard to air operations, the Advisory Committee notes from annex II, section C, item 6 (para. 22), that a B-200 aircraft was deployed to the mission area effective 20 July 1998 and an MI-8 helicopter was deployed effective 20

September 1998. The Committee recommends that flight hours for the aircraft and related costs be kept under review so as to obtain the maximum benefit for the Mission.

16. The Advisory Committee notes from annex II, section C, paragraph 12, that an amount of $327,600 has been estimated for additional travel costs for various survey teams to the mission area. The Committee believes that travel of some of these personnel could be combined so as to effectively achieve savings without affecting efficiency.

17. With regard to the action to be taken by the General Assembly, based on its comments and observations in paragraphs 12 to 15 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Assembly establish a special account for UNOMSIL for the purpose of accounting for income received and expenditure incurred in respect of the Mission, and appropriate and assess an amount of $22 million gross for the period from 13 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, inclusive of the amount of $783,700 gross ($768,100 net) relating to the period from 17 April to 12 July 1998, subject to the decision of the Security Council on the extension of the mandate of UNOMSIL beyond 13 January 1999.

Annex

Letter dated 13 August 1998 from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the Secretary-General

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the Controller's letter of 30 July 1998, requesting the concurrence of the Committee to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed $10,624,200 gross ($10,409,500 net) for the establishment and operation of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for the period from 13 July to 13 November 1998, in order to meet the immediate and essential start-up requirements of the Mission.

The Committee notes that the request is being made in connection with Security Council resolution 1181 (1998) of 13 July 1998, by which the Council decided, *inter alia*, to establish UNOMSIL for an initial period of six months, until 13 January 1999, to carry out the mandate indicated therein. The request for commitment authority is being sought in accordance with section IV of General Assembly resolution 49/233 A of 23 December 1994 on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of peacekeeping operations.

The Advisory Committee authorizes you to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed $10,624,200 gross ($10,409,500 net), in order to cover the immediate start-up requirements of UNOMSIL for the period from 13 July to 13 November 1998, pending the presentation to and consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session of the detailed report on the financing of UNOMSIL.

(*Signed*) C. S. M. **Mselle**
Chairman